



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

April 4, 1996

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APR 9 1996

The Honorable Ernest F. Hollings
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
558 Dirksen Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-6125

Dear Senator Hollings:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's plan in PR Docket No. 92-235 to consolidate the twenty Private Land Mobile Radio (PLMR) services, which include, among others, the Railroad Radio Service. You ask that the Commission, in moving to final action on this plan, strongly consider the unique safety needs of the nation's railroads and the adverse effect that such consolidation may have on rail safety communications.

The Commission decided in the *Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making* in PR Docket No. 92-235 that the existing twenty PLMR services should be consolidated into two to four service pools to achieve greater operational efficiency and promote more flexible use of the spectrum. Rather than dictating a specific plan and structure, the Commission requested that the PLMR community, including users, manufacturers, and frequency coordinators, submit a consensus plan to assist the Commission in consolidating the PLMR services in the most effective manner. While we did not receive such a consensus plan, a number of parties, including representatives from the railroad industry, have filed comments indicating their particular needs and presenting specific recommendations for consolidation of the PLMR services.

We are reviewing all of these comments, and we, of course, will attempt to fashion an approach that best serves the public interest. In determining the new structure of the PLMR services, the Commission will take into consideration the safety concerns expressed by user groups, such as the railroad industry. We intend to develop a plan that will promote efficient spectrum use and accommodate the concerns of the current twenty PLMR services without jeopardizing public safety. We recognize that several PLMR user groups, including

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The Honorable Ernest F. Hollings

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the railroad industry, perform critical functions for which effective communications are essential.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Hundt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Reed E. Hundt
Chairman

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

March 15, 1996

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The Honorable Reed E. Hundt
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Hundt:

I understand that the Federal Communications Commission is considering changes to its regulations concerning the Railroad Radio Service. One proposal would require railroads to share certain spectrum with other other public safety users. The consolidation of several radio services could lead to interference with railroad radio communications and could pose a critical threat to public safety on the nation's railroads.

For 50 years, the mobile radio channels used in the Railroad Radio Service have ensured the safety of railroad personnel and civilians across the country. Railroad radio systems allow railroad personnel throughout a train, along the railroad right-of-way, and in rail yards to communicate with each other and with dispatchers about conditions on board the train and on the tracks ahead.

As you know, railroad radio networks are similar to air traffic control and aeronautical en route communications systems. Both industries rely on their communications systems for traffic control, hazard and defect detection and the coordination of emergency assistance. Interference with the railroad radio networks, such as might occur if the railroads are required to share their frequencies with other public safety users, could create an unacceptable threat to railroad safety.

I urge you to consider strongly the unique safety needs of the nation's railroads in the current proceedings concerning the the Railroad Radio Service.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,

[Signature]
ERNEST F. HOLLINGS
Ranking Member

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